

We are just so excited and so thrilled for him, particularly given the family legacy surrounding the Iditarod. Ryan is the first Inupiaq Iditarod champion since 2011.

It is interesting, Mr. President. I don't want to jinx things, but if you look—this is our reader board that we have outside my office over in the Hart Building.

Every day this week, we have been kind of following the mushers up the trail so that people would know who is in the lead. And these are today's standings: Ryan, of course, in first. But he is followed by Pete Kaiser. Pete is from Bethel. Pete is Inupiaq. Richie Diehl. Richie is from Aniak, an Alaska Native. So if the places hold, it will be quite a strong and telling statement that our top three mushers would be Alaskan Natives.

Dog mushing has been a part of life and culture for Alaskan Native people long, long before the Iditarod. But it is an ongoing reminder—I think a really beautiful reminder—of how men and women and, really, incredible dogs can work together in some pretty extraordinary winter conditions, connecting communities, connecting people.

Ryan is an inspiration to so many of us, inspiring Alaskans and future generations of mushers, for how he cares for his team, for the character that he has shown as he has competed.

And so to Ryan, I am going to have an opportunity to speak with you directly, but you need to know that you represent the true spirit of Alaska. You make us all so very proud. And we certainly congratulate you as the 2023 Iditarod champion.

WILLOW PROJECT

Mr. President, as I am here on the floor today and speaking of great news for Alaskans, I cannot yield the floor without noting the significance of the news yesterday. Yesterday, a record decision was announced by the Biden administration announcing that the Willow Project, in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, has been approved and that ConocoPhillips, the producer, will be allowed to advance under what is now a modified alternative that will allow for three pads of drilling activity in the National Petroleum Reserve.

This is significant for Alaska from a jobs perspective. This is going to be about 2,500 jobs to a State that desperately needs that. This will be revenue and income to a State that desperately needs that. Our economy is still suffering in a post-pandemic world.

Our economy is still challenged in many, many ways. We are seeing a net outmigration unlike any State in the country. And it is because it is directly tied to the State of our economy. So we recognize that we are a resource-based State. So to be able to access resources not only for the benefit of Alaskans but for the benefit of the country, and, in fairness, for the benefit of our friends and allies who look to us—who look to us—and our resources to be able to help them as well.

I have been asked by many, "What is the Willow Project?" Well, the Willow Project is an oil project, yes. But Willow represents economic security; it represents energy security; and it represents national security.

It was a pretty incredible effort that came together to advance the cause of this. This was not one oil company that is standing off in the corner, saying: We want to be allowed to proceed here. It was an extraordinary coalition of Alaska Native leaders and individuals. It was an extraordinary coalition of labor leaders not only in the State; 100 percent of the labor unions in Alaska support advancing Willow backed by their national unions back here because they know that these will be good-paying jobs. These will be solid union jobs. These will be jobs for the future.

It was backed by a coalition of industry leaders, the university, unanimous—unanimous—resolutions out of both Houses of our State legislature. Think about that. We have a pretty broad spectrum across the political spectrum when it comes to our State legislature. So to know that from the southeast all the way to the north and the southwest that Alaskans came together, through their elected representatives, to affirm their support of this project advancing, it was really quite remarkable.

It was a united delegation—Senator SULLIVAN, Representative PELTOLA, and myself—coming together to lead this effort, working with our Governor. It was a coalition that was remarkable and remarked upon, and rightly so, because there are oftentimes so many matters that draw us apart. And there are—there are—opposing voices to this in Alaska. We understand that.

But I think it was so important that the voices of Alaskans—particularly those who live and work and raise their families in the North Slope—that those voices were heard. And what they heard from those who were from the North Slope region are that this is not only jobs in economic opportunity; these are resources that will help us with our quality of life, help us be able to resource and finance the search and rescue that goes on when somebody has gone missing on a hunting trip for their subsistence purposes, to help with the community supports, whether it is through the schools or public safety. The North Slope Borough is very unique in how they provide for all of their services for their residents in their eight communities across that huge borough that stretches all the way across the entire North Slope of the State.

And so, for them, this is significant and real in a meaningful way. It means everything to them in terms of health and wellness and life expectancy. As we have seen the benefits of the resources that come to these areas that flow from the oil, we have seen an absolute increase in life expectancy because of the quality of life that then can come

with decent housing, with decent healthcare, with access to food and resources.

What has been seen up north has been consequential. So this was an issue that when presented to the administration, when the Alaskan voices were allowed to be heard, the administration listened. And I thank them for that. I thank them for allowing those voices to be heard.

I also recognize that in addition to allowing Willow to advance, the administration is proposing to submit rule-making in a period of time, maybe within a matter of weeks, maybe a matter of months, that would provide for special protections—further special protections—within the NPRA.

There is much to be seen about what these protections will entail, whether it will allow for any level of activity, whether it be crossings in any way, pipeline or road, in any way. There is much to be learned. The administration has sent that signal that in order to advance the oil production opportunities within the Willow footprint—that vastly reduced footprint—that they want to add additional protections in several different areas.

We will evaluate that. We will take a look critically. There is a process that will follow. We understand that. But I think for today and where we are in recognizing the value that Willow will bring to Alaska, that Willow will bring to our country, it is important to applaud the actions of the administration and the President in advancing this.

At peak production, Willow is expected to bring online about 180,000 barrels of oil a day. That is significant. It is significant and putting it into context with where the United States has had to turn recently as we have looked to meet demand here in this country. The ask, the willingness to go to Venezuela, to lift sanctions, to ask for more production out of Venezuela—Venezuela will be providing us about 100,000 barrels a day.

Think about where we would be if Alaska's Willow opportunity were already online. We would not have had to go to Maduro. We would not have had to go to a country whose environmental track record is abysmal. We would not have to turn to those countries that not only have environmental degradation as they produce their resource but human rights issues that we don't want to see, we don't want to talk about. We just know that for this time we need your oil. We cannot export that environmental consequence.

We should be producing where we know we can do it safely, where it is under tight environmental conditions and restrictions and limitations, where the producers will adhere to the rules of the road, the rule of law, that there is a sensitivity to the environment around there as we operate up north.

They say that we have some of the tightest environmental conditions on how we access our resources out of the northern region than anywhere—anywhere not only in the country but in

the world. And there is a reason for that. It costs more. It adds to the cost. But there is a sensitivity to the land. And we appreciate that. As an Alaskan, I appreciate that and I expect that and I demand that of the companies. And if you are not willing to operate this way, then you shouldn't be coming to Alaska.

But companies that are willing to respect the fact that when the tundra is no longer frozen, there is no exploration activity. There is no work that proceeds in that way off of the tundra.

So in Alaska, our season, if you will, is 90 days. It is 90 days. And it is not 90 days in the good weather. It is between basically January and April—the coldest, darkest, harshest time that anyone could be up on the North Slope, much less being outside and working. But that is how we do it because that is when the ground is frozen. That is when we have that license to operate, if you will. And we respect that. And it is not when the companies decide we are done with this aspect of the program. When things start to warm up and start to thaw, that is when you are gone. And you are gone because the State regulators and the Federal regulators have said: Clock is up. You don't have extra additional days because spring is coming.

And so think about that. Any other business in the world, can you think about having just a 90-day window of operation? We do a fair amount of that in Alaska because, quite honestly, our seafood industry is certainly that way out in Bristol Bay. We do have a lot of seasonal activity. But think about what that means if you are trying to build a project and you have to stop—stop—after 90 days. Think about what it means to design a project around sensitive areas that may have wildlife or waterfowl that we need to be sensitive. Well, that is what we do. This project—this Willow Project—that was sent back for revision was to make sure that the impact on subsistence hunting, the impact on the animals was not going to be appreciable. And so there is a sensitivity. We get it. We get it.

The people who live up there are the first stewards of the land, and they get it. So when you have whaling captains who are standing shoulder to shoulder with the Alaska delegation out in front of the Capitol, standing there saying that we need Willow—we need Willow for our economy, we need Willow for our people, and we will make sure that the subsistence needs of those who live in the area are met. We will make sure that the environmental considerations are met. So we are ready. We are ready to proceed.

As I stand here, I am regretful that I think the next phase of this is not necessarily going to be movement towards gaining production; it is going to be movement towards the courts because that is just what seems to happen in every development project in my incredible State. But we are prepared for

that as well. We are prepared for that as well because this project is environmentally sound, it is just, it is fair, it is balanced, and it is time.

Again, I stand here appreciative that the administration has heard the voice of Alaskans. Now, let's get to work.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the years, I have heard President Biden share a favorite expression of his father's. He said his dad would tell you:

Don't tell me what you value. Show me your budget and I'll tell you what you value.

Well, there is a lot of wisdom in that statement. A person's budget shows what they truly value, whether that is supporting those who are less fortunate, saving for the future, or achieving a certain type of lifestyle. The same is true for the Federal Government. It is easy for leaders to say they value a strong military or fiscal responsibility, but a budget shows whether they really mean it.

Last week, of course, President Biden released his budget for the next fiscal year, which gave us an unvarnished view of what he truly values. In countless ways, it stands in stark contrast to what he has told the American people.

The President spoke about the need to rein in out-of-control spending, but he proposed more than \$2 trillion in new spending.

Given the growing threats from China and Russia, he says he cares about a strong national defense, but he proposed a mere 3.2-percent increase in defense spending—far below the level of inflation. So it actually is a cut.

He has spoken about the importance of growing our economy, but he proposed additional job-killing tax hikes on Main Street businesses and other job creators.

He says he is concerned about energy costs but proposed \$37 billion in new energy taxes—taxes that will be paid ultimately by the consumer in increased costs.

Despite saying he cares about the border, President Biden made it absolutely clear he isn't serious about addressing the crisis at our southern border. For 2 years, law enforcement and border communities have struggled to keep up with the overwhelming number of migrants who are crossing every day. During President Biden's first 2 years in office, Customs and Border Protection encountered 4.7 million—4.7 million—migrants at the southern border. That is astonishing, a breathtaking figure.

Well, there is a clear need, an obvious need to strengthen our border security, and the President's budget request includes \$535 million for border security technology at and between the ports of entry. At ports, this could include advanced equipment to efficiently scan cargo and passenger vehicles.

Mexico is our second largest trading partner, and that binational trade is

important to both of our economies. But this same technology could be key to stopping illicit drugs, weapons, and currency from coming across the border.

Between the ports of entry, this funding could go toward sensors, cameras, and other surveillance tools that allow Border Patrol agents to monitor unpatrolled portions of the border and to spring into action when necessary.

Given the ongoing migration crisis and fentanyl epidemic which is killing 70,000 Americans every year, there could not be a more important time to invest in border security. While the President's request for \$535 million may sound like a lot of money—and it is a lot of money—when you compare it to other line items in his budget, it starts to look a whole lot smaller. For example, the White House wants to spend \$1 billion trying to address the "root causes" of migration in Central America and Haiti. That is nearly double the amount he wants to spend on border security technology.

Over the last few years, we have seen failed attempts to alleviate what are called the push factors—violence and poverty—that cause people to leave their home countries and come to the United States. But don't forget that these migrants are not just coming from Central America and Haiti; they are literally coming from all over the world. Best case scenario, it would take years, if ever, before these efforts would translate to even 1 inch of progress at the border.

I have said before what I learned at the Yuma Border Patrol Sector in southwestern Arizona when the Border Patrol chief said that in this sector alone, a sleepy little agricultural community, we have people coming across the border from 176 countries, speaking 200 languages. This is a global phenomenon not just isolated to Central America and Haiti.

Well, worst case scenario, the administration flushes \$1 billion down the drain while the border remains in a state of crisis.

The White House wants to spend even more money on the Department of Homeland Security's climate resilience program—climate resilience. A whopping \$4 billion is what they want for that. That is more than seven times higher than what the President has proposed for border security technology. Now, the mission of the Department of Homeland Security isn't to fight climate change; it is to safeguard the American people. It cannot achieve that mission with the meager budget proposed by President Biden and the lack of priorities.

You may think that climate resilience is an important matter, but it certainly doesn't rise to the level of the crisis we are experiencing today on the border, with an overwhelming number of migrants and illegal drugs that killed 108,000 Americans last year alone.